WEST L.A. ATARI USERS NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

As I approach the halfway point of my term as president, I am becoming concerned as to who will take over my office in December. I know that December may seem like a long time away, but I do not know of anyone who is thinking of taking over the presidency; the person who does take it over should start getting involved, at least minimally, now. Just to give you an idea, I spend, not including meetings, about 5 hours a month working for the club. It is not only my office that will need to be filled, but most of the other officer positions will need to be filled too. If you are intrested, please contact me at the next meeting.

Next month should be a great meeting! Bill Wilkinson of OSS will be here demonstrating BASIC XL, MAC/65, ACTION!, and DOS XL. We will also have Pete Menotti doing a Modem/BBS demo. We will continue to have our Indus Drive raffle so bring $5 for that! Our regular $1 raffle will also be there.

COME TO THE NEXT MEETING
****
STILL BEING HELD AT PAUL REVERE JR. HIGH

It will be held in room J1, the adress is 1450 Allenford Ave.(go north on 26th steet from West L.A. and Santa Monica, Allenford is a continuation of 26th) The time is 7:00 on Wed. JUNE 6, 1984.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

Our speaker will be BILL WILKERSON of OSS software (he's the man who wrote ATARI BASIC)--He will demonstrate BASIC XL (a super BAsic fully compatible with regular Atari Basic).

AND PETE MENOTTI DOING AN ON LINE BBS DEMO !!!!

*****TO AVOID JULY 4 -- JULY'S MEETING WILL BE ON WED. JULY 11*****

THERE WILL BE AN OFFICERS MEETING ON JUNE 13 AT AT 7 PM-- AT PAUL REVERE.

LAST MEETINGS MINUTES

Our May meeting featured Mr. Sheldon Alden of Rystar Electronics, with a demonstration of their device that not only filters out any type of line disturbance but also maintains a constant voltage level. Mr.Alden began by defining various electrical terms neccessary to understand his lecture. The following is a simple breakdown of his important points.
(1) Computers are designed to run for 20 to 40 years if the power supplies were clean & could maintain 110 volts.
(2)Over-voltage (24 volts over 110 volts and up) called surges or spikes, ruin the power sypply components and can pit any chip in the interior circuit - this disturbs storage in RAM and also causes read and write errors in disks.
(3)Blackouts and Brownouts - it was suggested that you turn the computer

off so that the surge coming through the line on power-up will not hurt the computer.

Mr.Alden had a device attached to the power line that registered any fluctuation coming into the building and during the demo it was reacting to these changes. When the Tycor Filter was attached through the line, the device showed a perfect clean form of electrical power. Its reaction time is less than .004 nano second. He had a nice packet of information for all members that showed his products and gave price listings.

After the break — Mitch Paull, our Disk Librarian gave us a demonstration of Draper Pascal programing, which he is using to learn Pascal principles. It uses its own DOS, has few sub-programs, has its own compiler, is easy to toggle from its main menu and has good files. The only weak section is its use of arrays.

We then watched parts of two video programs sent to us from Atari. The raffle rounded out another great evening.

BITS ABOUT ATARI BASIC

BY KENNETH SUZUKI

For Begining BASIC Programers
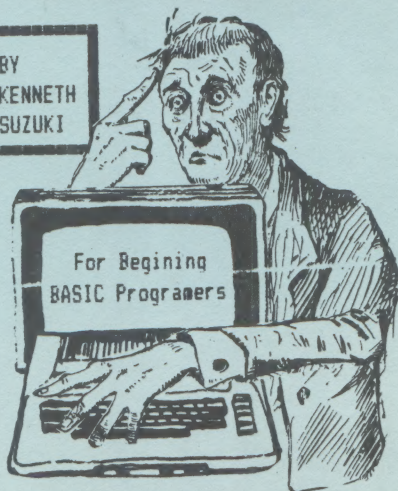
To the beginning programmers in the User Group, programming in Atari BASIC is still very bewildering. Through the small "bits" of information that are presented in this column, I hope another of the pieces to understanding is added to the of the puzzle.

Some of the smallest details can have some of the most important effects for successful programs, and therefore, are important to present to you. One of these important "details" is the requirement of telling the computer how long a possible word or response will be in your user-friendly program. This simple, yet essential command is called the DIM or DIMensioning statement.

Lesson #9: The DIM Statement

One of the special requirements of the Atari BASIC is that you give it an "idea" of how long an INPUT or GET response may be. Generally, these responses will be a letter, letters, a word or words. These kinds of responses using letters rather than numbers are called "String Variables". As you learned in mathematics, the "variable" is a letter symbol used to show that "something" will be in that spot, and that it could be different or "vary" depending on the problem.

When a string variable is writt[en] in a program it can have letters and numbers followed by a dollar sign. Here are some examples:

```
A$
X1$
NAME$
WLAAUG$
```

When you are going to have a response in your program using the variable string, then each of them must be DIMensioned. Try this sample below:

```
10 PRINT "Type in your name"
20 INPUT NAME$
30 PRINT "Hello, ";NAME$
```

If you run this program, what happens? You should have gotten an "ERROR-9" statement. The computer is letting you know that you forgot to DIM your string variable.

The DIM should be made large enough to cover the number of letters you think the response might be. Try the same program above but add this line to it:

```
5 DIM NAME$(25)
```

If you run the program it will now work.

Type in the following program, noticing the location of the DIM statement and what it is doing. As always, experiment by changing odds and ends to get the most in understanding.

```
10 DIM A$(15)
20 ? "Please type in your name"
30 INPUT A$
40 SETCOLOR 2,0,0
50 GRAPHICS 2+16
60 POSITION 5,3:?#6;"ATARI and"
70 POSITION 5,5:?#6;A$
80 FOR Z=0 TO 16
90 SETCOLOR 0,0,Z
100 NEXT Z
110 GOTO 40
```

PLU-PERFECT REVIEW

by
Dick Reaser

Mix & Match: Letter Perfect, Spell
Perfect, Word Star,
Atari, DEC Rainbow, S-100, CP/M,
CP/M-86, LJK Dos, Atari Dos
Hayes and US Robotics

(or "How I avoided 17 pages of
retyping")

Some time back you may have seen some of my queries on the BBS's regarding the compatibility of CP/M and ATARI X-Modem transfer of text files. Here is the story behind those questions.

My church decided to revise their 17 page constitution which only existed in hardcopy (paper) form. It was time to get it on disk, so that modifications (this one as well as future ones) could be done with a word processor. Guess who had the only computer in the congregation!!! Yep, me, the guy who hates to type. We finally found a volunteer typist, but it was inconvenient for her to come to my house. However, she did have access to a DEC Rainbow computer using Wordstar at her work place during lunch and at break times. I suggested that she go ahead and get started and somehow we could get it into my computer for editing, spell checking, formatting and printing using Letter Perfect.

The next sequence of events is somewhat involved, but look at all the typing I didn't have to do.

A friend of mine in her office did a "wire to wire" (RS-232 to RS-232 port without benefit of Modem) transfer from the DEC CP/M-86 5 1/4" disk to a standard 8" CP/M Microbyte computer disk. Then he took the disk home to his S-100 "home brew" computer with 8" CP/M disk drives. He thought that he had a CP/M ASCII X-Modem program to transmit the file to my Amodplus program at receiving end, but he didn't after all. He broke the file into 3 parts in the hope that the smaller files would fit into my Amodplus buffer one at a time. They wouldn't. I switched to Tele-Talk which has a tremendous capture buffer and had no trouble getting the files unto an ATARI Dos disk. So far, so good!!!

I converted the 3 files to LJK Dos and combined/redivided them into 2 files (My LJK RAM wouldn't hold the entire file at one time. I did this by duplicating the middle section file (under a different name) and then used [control][X] and [control][W] to "delete all after the curser" in the original and "delete all after the curser" in the duplicate. I then used the merge function to combine the first section with the first half of the middle section. The third file was then added to the last half of the middle section.

To my dismay, the text had come over the modem already formatted with right hand justification!! This meant that there was a carriage return at the end of every line and extra spaces in between words to perform the right hand justification.

Not to worry! I used [control][R] "conditional search and replace". I searched for Quadruple [spacebar] and replaced with Single [spacebar] where appropriate. I then repeated the operation for the remaining Triple and Double spaces that remained unto an ATARI Dos disk.

Now to worry! I could not find a way to search for all the extra carriage returns and replace them with a Double space, Single space or Nothing as required. I just couldn't find a way to produce the little left arrow that represents a carriage return in Letter Perfect (using the carriage return key was interpreted as a command rather than a character). [control][tab] would produce an inverse left arrow but the [Atari] key is disabled so that I couldn't change it to a normal left arrow. So... I had to do it brute force using the [control][down arrow], [control][A], [control][Z] keys to pick them up and then delete them one at a time.

If any one learns how to search for [carriage returns] and replace them with something else, please let me know.

Then I Spell checked it and linked the second file to the first by putting a [control][V]["] and the name of the second file at the end of the first file. At print time, I called for the first file to be printed. When it got to the end, it automatically called up the second file to the printer. The header and page numbering started on the first file continued right on into the second. I was somewhat concerned that it might not.

We got it signed, distributed and the original (along with a Disk copy) put in a safe deposit box until it's time for the next revision. It will be a lot less pain the next time!!! It will be even less trouble if I can get the typist to come to my computer.

If there is a message in all this, it is that "Where there is a will, there is a way". It certainly demonstrated the Power of the Atari Computer.
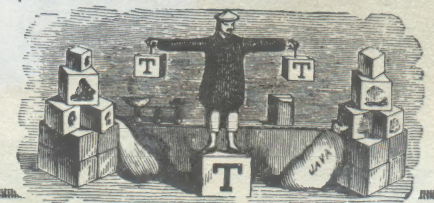
BITS, BYTES & WORDS

By Terry Craig

The following letter is proof positive that those who ask shall receive (in this column, anyway).

"I fnd that when I read the Atari Users Newsletter I generally understand about one tenth of what is written. It gives me great pleasure to realize that I too can contribute information. In your request to find out how to underline with ATARIWRITER and the 1027 printer I know the answer. Press CONTROL O 14 before what you want to underline and CONTROL O 15 after what you want to underline. I found this out by calling ATARI Hotline (800) 672-1404. Thanks again for the ego boost!

    Sincerely,
    Lucky"

And thank you, Lucky. This column is intended to be a forum for the exchange of information among the readers so I hope more people will follow your example.

A couple of weeks ago I bought yet another book, "DR. C. WACKO'S MIRACLE GUIDE TO DESIGNING AND PROGRAMMING YOUR OWN ATARI COMPUTER ARCADE GAMES." Please don't be put off by the title. This book is obviously aimed at young teenagers and the author thinks they are attracted by silly cartoon characters making corny jokes. The style may set your teeth on edge but if you have just mastered the fundamentals of BASIC and are looking to expand your knowledge of Atari graphics then this is a good book for you. As the title plainly states the book is designed to teach the reader how to create his own video games using BASIC. Even if you are not interested in video games this book is an excellent introduction to the use of redefined character sets, character set animation, joystick-controlled motion, sound and player-missile graphics. The text

takes a step-by-step approach that is clear and easy to understand. Along the way there are simple explanations of such useful programming techniques as how to put assembly language programs into strings. (This makes the assembly language program an integral part of the BASIC program--no more worry about where in memory to safely put your machine language routines.) Of course, all of the material in the book is available from other sources. The strength of this book is in the way it puts it all together. All the programs in the book are contained on an accompanying double-sided disk. There are some useful utilities including a nice character set editor. From the way it is written I guess the book is also being sold without the disk and all programs including the utilities will work with cassette. Despite my misgivings about the "comic book" approach I still think this is one of the best intermediate level progamming books available.

Learning to program from a book--even a good book--can be a frustrating experience. We all need to ask questions. One of the reasons I joined the Atari Users Group is to get help with programming problems. The Group should provide programming clinics and programming courses. The questions are what courses, who teaches them, where and when are they held. These are topics that can be and should be discussed at meetings but I, for one, can't make most meetings and I'm sure that other members can't always attend either. So I propose this column as a forum for the discussion of this topic. Since all members receive the newsletter the dialog would be open to all. If you are willing to teach a particular subject please write in. It could be as broad a topic as BASIC, Pascal or Assembly language or as specific as player-missile graphics or display list interupts. If you would like to be a counselor and answer specific questions from members please write in and explain the circumstances under which you'd be willing to do this. Naturally, those who would like

to particpate as learners should write in and specify what topics they would like covered when they would like classes to take place, etc. My experience is that those who pay for education tend to take it more seriously. I think that resonable and nominal fees that would either go to teacher or to the Users Group or would be split between them might be a good idea. Also, I would like to see the Users Group institute a bulletin board which would be a great way to get and give quick answers to programming questions. Here's your chance to get yourself heard on this subject. Send your letters to:
Terry Craig
719 Superba Ave.
Venice, Ca. 90291

PEEKING INTO WLAAG

by Kenneth Suzuki

Hardware for Meetings:
  Karim Watanghi
  Richard Schiffman
  Anthony Zuanich
  Dick Reaser

Refreshments:
  John Nodar

BASIC Programming Help:
  Peter Kuisk

Assembly Programming Help:
  John Scheid

FORTH Programming Help:
  Richard Schiffman

The members present at the May User group meeting applauded for these committee members for making the demonstrations possible. Through their help, "the" West Los Angeles Atari User Group got a little closer to becoming "Our" User Group.

Many members fear becoming involved. They feel that their

knowledge is insufficient, or that their time and energy cannot be dedicated enough to make a difference. A simple container of punch, a bag of cookies, the loan of a monitor, or your opinion of a piece of Atari software is all that is needed. If you have even some expertise in programming, think of how you can help those members who have little or no knowledge. And if you then cannot answer a programming question, meet another member more advanced to help both you and the beginner. That's what a User Group like "Ours" is all about!!!

At this next meeting, join in with us and be a part of a committee, submit an article, or even help us with the refreshments. Your smallest contribution is the biggest PLUS for WLAAUG.

REVIEW

GATEWAY TO APSHAI
by
Brigid Windisch

Treasures, monsters and spells, O my!! Here you have your basic action-adventure game. Lucky for you, you're father was Apshai's greatest warrior and his strength, agility and prowess has been handed down to you. Unlucky, however, since you don't find this out till you're practically at the front door of more than a hundred dungeons with a possible seven thousand rooms to go through, but hey! this is fantasy.

You start at level One with a dagger and leather armor, five lives, and your health, a combination of strength, agility and luck, at optimum. Your objective is find and reclaim a safe passageway through the underground labyrinth to reopen the famed Gates of Apshai and therefore bring prosperity to the land.

You have eight levels to go through with a choice of 16 different and exciting dungeons to choose from at each level. As you go through each

room, you may find weapons, treasures or spells to help you on your way. But watch out there are also traps and monsters along the way.

Along the way, the weapons become better and more helpful to your quest, so be sure to put them in your magic sack or better yet have them at ready.

There are also magic potions and spells for you to find and use.

Most important, however, is to always be on guard. The risks grow progressively greater as you go along, but a measly little cave fungus can kill you just as dead as the worst behemoth. The treasures also get more

USER GROUP DISCOUNT STORES

Software Supermarket
11960 Wilshire Blvd.
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10% off hardware- 15% off software

Video and Audio Center
619 Wilshire Blvd.
458-3173
20% off software-will beat ANY hardware price

HW Computers Redondo Beach
2301 Artesia Blvd.
370-5556
10% off hardware- 20% off software

Software Centre-2 locations

1st location
8322 Wilshire Blvd.
655-9214
20% off Software

2nd location
11768 W. Pico Blvd.
473-1136
10% off everything in the store

WANTED SECRE-TARY WLAAUG

Products on sale, usually do not qualify for a discount.

Our Disk Library, Newsletter Library, and Atari Technical Notes are at the Software Supermarket.

Always present your membership card when using club materials or requesting a discount.

✳✳✳✳✳✳✳✳✳✳ Ad Rates ✳✳✳✳✳✳✳✳✳✳

25.00-Half Page
40.00-Whole Page

Ads must be submitted to the editor in a "camera-ready" form.

President-Greg Waldorf

Vice President-Ken Suzuki

Sec/Treasurer-Bob Bruce

Newsletter Editor-Bill Skurski

Disk Librarian-Mitch Paull

Newsletter Exchange -Dick Reaser

Membership Chairman-Rick Hernandez

Member Representitive-Terry Craig
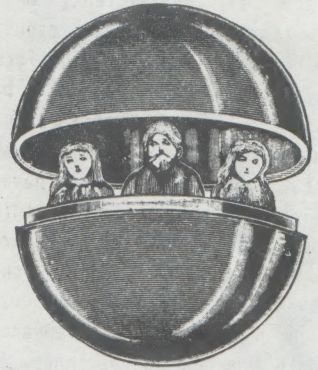
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Newsletter Exchange:
Dick Reaser
5611 Sherbourne Dr.
L.A., CA 90056

All other information including membership dues:
WLAAUG
P.O. Box 84-396
L.A., CA 90073

**** Wanted New Location To Meet

valuable as you progress from level to level, so don't get to greedy at the early levels. Of course, you also realize the greater the value the bigger the risk, and there are some interesting traps laid just for you.

All in all, if this is your kind of game, I think you'll enjoy it. There are enough choices to keep it interesting and you can play a different game each time you play.

Mitchell Paull
DISK LIBRARIAN

First off, I would like to thank Ernie March for both writting and also donating six AMS songs. Believe it or not, other then one officer, Dick Reaser, Ernie March is the only person to submit to me any program for our libarary.

This months article is about the program called animal located in volumn I in education disk #2B. A number of you have complained to me about bugs in this program. Well now the bugs are out. Basicly what was wrong was the original programer forgot to DIM some of the varibles and DIM some of them to small.

For those of you familar with animals, written in Integer Basic on the Apple computer, this program is an exact copy. Upon loading this program, the first thing you must do is set up the file. Not to worry the first prompt the program ask for is whether or not you need to set up the file. If yes is answered the program writes the file. If no is answered the program excutes.

Animals is a guessing game. The user thinks of an animal and the

computer tries to guess it. At first the computer has only about eight animals it can guess. If the computer guesses wrong it asks for the name of the animal and a good question for it. Thus, an almost unlimited number of animals can be stored on disk. This game, if you want to call it that, is great for kids to learn certain characterists of some animals. Also, I find it very enjoyable to try to think up new animals. In short, for a most enjoyable educational game look into 'animal'.

West Los Angeles Atari Users Group
P. O. Box 84-396
Los Angeles, CA 90073

MARINA DEL REY, CA
PM
JUN 14
1984

USA 20c Harry S. Truman

Current.
Richard Resser

      West Los Angeles Atari Users Group